

BALTIMORE SUN  
3 MARCH 1977ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A-6Belenko, VIKTOR  
300401/1 W. Germany  
STERN

## Pilot defector says Soviet has fake bases, maneuvers

Hamburg, West Germany (AP)—A Soviet pilot who defected to the United States has told of the Russians building phony air bases to fool satellite surveillance while they put the real ones underground, *Stern* magazine reported yesterday.

Lt. Viktor I. Belenko, who flew his MIG-25 to Japan in September, was also quoted as telling U.S. intelligence interrogators that Soviet military authorities are plagued by severe troop morale problems that led to numerous suicides.

*Stern* said its information came from a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency report on Lieutenant Belenko and quoted him as saying that so-called "cold belts" are buried in the ground above the hidden bases to screen them from infrared cameras which can detect heat from troops and equipment. The bases, housing thousands of men, are linked to runways by tunnels as long as 30 miles, the article said.

Coupled with the underground installations are fake air bases above ground with empty buildings and mock planes, designed to mislead Western intelligence, *Stern* said. It added that, since Lieutenant Belenko revealed the existence of the fake bases, 134 of them have been identified in Siberia by Pentagon experts, most of them near the Chinese border.

The pilot reportedly told the CIA that every two months 12 members of his unit were flown to temporary duty at one of the decoy air bases to move the aircraft mockups around and simulate activity to fool Chinese air patrols and U.S. experts studying satellite pictures.

Lieutenant Belenko defected to Japan September 6 in a MIG-25 jet, providing Western intelligence officials with their

first close look at the advanced supersonic fighter.

In weeks of questioning by the CIA, Lieutenant Belenko revealed 4,000 Soviet military secrets that will require the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to make major changes in Western air defense strategy, the magazine claimed.

"Details included sizes of flight squadrons, positions of underground missiles, command centers and atomic bomb depots, sites of attack and alarm aircraft and secret codes from Belenko's squadron," the magazine said.

"But the questioners were really stunned when [Lieutenant Belenko]... described how brittle the fighting morale of the individual units is and how hard daily life is in general for the Soviet Army," it added.

"Life at front-line air bases of Siberia is spartan and marked by the most brutal slavish obedience. According to the sermons of our political officers, we were a living barbed-wire fence against imperialist enemies who will attack Siberia," Lieutenant Belenko was quoted as saying.

*Stern* quoted him further as saying there were "two to five suicide attempts per month in our 40-man barracks during the gloomy winter months. Bunk neighbors of suicides automatically received seven days' confinement for failure to provide help. With this penalty they tried to force us to denounce suicide candidates."

He also described the summary execution of a Soviet pilot who had tried to desert from the unit during a night march. Tracked down, the pilot was brought back to the airfield and shot by a firing squad while the others were called out of bed to watch.